

Sustainable and Safe Waters Research Program

High Priority Projects Being Conducted by NCEA

DRAFT

1. Title: Mountaintop Mining Valley-Fill Assessment Report

- a. Objective: Complete a literature review of the science pertaining to the effects of mountaintop mining valley-fill operations on stream condition.
- b. Type/category of project: Supports regulatory, statutory and court deadlines.
- c. Expected Product: Published EPA Report
- d. Client: Report requested by Region 3, the Office of Water, and the Administrator's Office.
- e. Milestone Dates: Final EPA report to be completed by March 30, 2011. However, we continue to provide ongoing technical support to OW and Regions 3, 4, and 5 – at their request - to support permitting decisions.
- f. Resources involved: 2 FTE in FY2011; 1.5 FTE in FY2012

2. Title: Conductivity Advisory Benchmark Report

- a. Objective: Develop a conductivity advisory benchmark protective of aquatic life in Appalachian streams impacted by mountaintop mining valley-fill operations.
- b. Type/category of project: Supports regulatory, statutory and court deadlines.
- c. Expected Product: Published EPA report
- d. Client: report requested by Region 3 and the Office of Water
- e. Milestone Dates: Final EPA report to be completed by March 30, 2011. However, we continue to provide ongoing technical support to OW and Regions 3, 4, and 5 – at their request - to support permitting decisions.
- f. Resources involved: 2 FTE in FY2011; 1.5 FTE in FY2012

3. Title: Waters of the United States Technical Support Document

- a. Objective: Review and synthesis of the peer-reviewed evidence for the hydrologic, chemical, and biological connectivity between types of surface waters in the United States
- b. Type/category of Project: Supports regulatory, statutory or court deadlines.
- c. Expected Product: Published EPA report
- d. Client: Report requested by the Office of Water
- e. Milestone Dates: Internal review draft completed January 31, 2011; External review draft expected July 2011; Final technical support document expected March 2012
- f. Resources involved: 2.5 FTE for each of FY2011 and FY2012

- g. Note: NCEA coordinating project with significant assistance from ORD staff from NHEERL and NERL.

4. Title: Ecological Causal Assessment Program

- a. Objective: Develop, synthesize, and provide to EPA stakeholders information on stressor-response relationships needed to more accurately identify the probable causes of biological impairments in aquatic systems
- b. Type/category of Project: Commitment from ORD to support OW TMDL program
- c. Expected Products: Continued maintenance, revision, and update of the causal assessment website CADDIS (www.epa.gov/caddis); Demonstration of causal assessment approaches and stressor-response relationships through conduct of case studies with state stakeholders; Training and outreach to Regional and state stakeholders
- d. Client: Activities support the OW TMDL program
- e. Milestone Dates: Collaboration with Australian eWater team underway to expand causal literature database; Expansion of CADDIS website expected Summer 2011 and Fall 2012; Additional case studies planned with Region 9 to support State of CA biocriteria program, FY2012.
- f. Resources involved: 2.5 FTE for each of FY2011 and FY2012

5. Title: Pebble Mine Risk Assessment and Bristol Bay Basin

- a. Objective: Provide technical support and potentially consult on the completion of a risk assessment for the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska
- b. Type/category of Project: Supports regulatory, statutory, or court deadlines
- c. Expected Products: Initially review of risk assessment by The Nature Conservancy. Additional products yet to be defined.
- d. Client: Support requested by the Office of Water
- e. Milestone Dates: To be determined
- f. Resources involved: 1 FTE in FY2011; Outyear support to be determined.